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ABSTRACT

This handbook provides a brief overview of apprenticeship and explains how women can find and participate in an apprenticeship program. Topics covered include the following: definition of an apprenticeship, trades that are apprenticeable, why and how to apply, how to choose a trade, requirements for an apprenticeship, supportive services, job discrimination, and sexual harassment. The guide also provides an action checklist, a list of Job Service offices in Connecticut, a list of the state's vocational-technical schools, and seven references. (KC)

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Women in Apprenticeships

Steps to Building a Career

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June 1989

WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP?

An apprenticeship is a program that allows you to learn a skilled craft or trade by providing on the job training and classroom instruction. As an apprentice, a worker has the opportunity to earn wages while she learns skills in a supervised work situation. Apprenticeships are sponsored by trade unions such as the carpenters, electricians and bricklayers, as well as by private employers.

An apprentice works under the supervision of a skilled worker called a journeyperson. Apprentices must take **several hours of classroom instruction each week.** The classes are usually held in the evenings at a vocational technical high school for apprentices in the construction and service trades. For the machine tool trades, classes are conducted during the day and the employer pays the apprentice her hourly wage for the time spent in class. The classes teach the technical aspects of a trade, such as drafting and blueprint reading. After completing both the on the job training and the classroom instruction, the apprentice receives a certificate which gives her journeyperson status. The entire **training program usually lasts from 2 to 4 years**, depending upon the trade.

Starting pay for an apprentice is generally about 50% of a journeyperson's going wage. Every six months, an apprentice will receive a raise until she is earning a journeyperson's wage at the completion of her training.

WHICH TRADES ARE APPRENTICEABLE?

There are approximately 400 apprenticeable trades listed by the State Labor Department. Here are some examples:

Aircraft Mechanic
Appliance Servicer
Auto Body Mechanic
Auto Mechanic
Baker
Bindery Worker
Boilermaker
Bricklayer
Cabinetmaker
Carpenter
Clockmaker
Comercial Photographer
Dental Technician
Diemaker
Drafter
Electrician
Electronic Technician
Foundry Worker
Graphics Arts Technician
Grinder
Heating & Cooling Mechanic
Heavy Equipment Mechanic
Ironmaker
Machinist
Millwright
Motorcycle Mechanic
Offset Press Oeprator
Painter
Patternmaker
Plumbing Mechanic
Refrigeration Mechanic
Roofer
Screw Mechanic Operator
Sheet Metal Worker
Sprinkler Fitter
Structural Steel Erector
Surveyor
Telephone Services Installer
Tool & Die Maker
Upholsterer
Welder
Woodworker

WHY SHOULD I APPLY FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP?

- An apprenticeship is a unique opportunity for you to **earn a living while learning a skilled trade**. You are actually being paid to learn.

- The journeyperson's status that you achieve at the end of your apprenticeship is a **widely respected credential** that adds to your ability to secure a good job.

- Learning a skilled trade gives you a chance to see the results of your labor and take pride in the finished work. Women do not often get this **sense of accomplishment** from traditional jobs.

- Women who work in the trades have an opportunity to earn good wages. Working women earn on the average 65% of what working men earn. This is because of the clustering of women into jobs that are generally low paying, such as sales, service and factory work. In July of 1988, in CT, the median hourly wage for an experienced word processor was $9.43, for an experienced file clerk $6.10, and for an experienced typist $7.52. During the same period, carpenters earned a median hourly wage of $13.20. Electricians earned $14.50 and motor vehicle mechanics earned $13.20. Although apprentices generally earn a beginning hourly wage in the range of $6-$8, they have the opportunity to earn much higher wages by the time they reach journeyperson status. Entering an apprenticeship may be a way to improve your economic status.

WHICH TRADE DO I CHOOSE?

- Choosing a trade should result from matching your interests and abilities with job requirements and work conditions. Do you have organizational skills, good manual dexterity, or attention to detail? How about ability to follow instructions and an eye for accuracy? Think of the tasks that you have performed in past jobs, at school, or in managing a home and family. Try to transfer these skills to a work setting like you would find in one of the trades.

- Go to your school or public library and look at the **Occupational Outlook Handbook**. This book contains job titles, nature of the work, job duties, tools, training requirements, salary range and employment outlook for most jobs. Find out what kinds of jobs are available, which skills are involved, what the working conditions are like, the physical requirements, etc.

- Narrow your choices down to a couple of options. Try to get as much exposure as possible to the trades in which you are interested. You should:

    . Talk to other people, especially women, who work in a trade. Ask them what they do each day, what they like and dislike about their work.

    . If you can get the opportunity, follow someone around on the work site for a day so you can observe first hand what a typical day is like.

- Take a course in a related field at your local adult education center or vocational technical school. To become familiar with tools and basic operations, find courses or mini-courses in subjects such as woodworking, drafting, house building, furniture repair, blueprint reading and solar heating. If you aren't able to enroll in a course, sit in on a class at a vocational technical school and observe the work that is being done. Call the Employment and Education Hotline at 1-800-842-0229 or 566-8118 in Hartford to get information on classes in your area.

- Then think about specific working conditions like:

  - Do you prefer to work inside or outside?
  - Do you prefer to work alone or on a team?
  - Would you mind working in a cramped or dirty environment?
  - Are you afraid of heights?
  - Do you mind physically demanding work?
  - Do you mind working in a setting that is mostly male?

HOW DO I APPLY FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP?

- After you have selected one or two of the trades, you **must contact**:

  The Connecticut Labor Department
  Office of Job Training and Skill Development
  200 Folly Brook Boulevard
  Wethersfield, Ct 06109
  566-2450

  Tell them that you would like to apply for an apprenticeship and need an application form sent to you. **Complete this form and return it to the above address**, at which time you will be placed in an applicant "pool". When an apprenticeship opportunity opens in the trade(s) and geographical area(s) you specified on the application form, you will be notified by mail. You will then be instructed to **apply to the union or private employer that is offering the apprenticeship**. The application procedure for a union apprenticeship will include an aptitude test and an interview with a committee of union and management representatives. For employer sponsored apprenticeships, the application process varies from company to company. If taking tests worries you, your local adult education center may offer some math or English refresher courses which might help you feel more comfortable. Call the Education and Employment Hotline at 1-800-842-0229 or 566-8118(in Hartford) to get the number for the adult education center in your area.

- Next, go to your local Connecticut Job Service Office and meet with the staff person assigned to handle apprenticeships. A list of the Job Service Offices is included at the end of this booklet. You will be instructed to complete another application form and possibly take a general aptitude test. If the Job Service Office has any apprenticeship openings listed for the trade(s) in which you are interested, you will be notified by mail.

- Don't wait for a job to come to you. **Be resourceful and go out and knock on doors.** Find out which employers in your area perform work in your trade interest. Tell them that you are seeking an apprenticeship.

- **Competition for apprenticeships is keen so getting into an apprenticeship can take a long time.** Be patient but continue to do your own job search. Make sure your application stays active. If you have questions about your status, call the Labor Department Office of Job Training and Skill Development at 566-2450.

WHEN DO I APPLY?

- **Apprenticeship openings may occur at any time.** The timing is influenced by the particular trade, weather conditions, the pace of the economy, retirements of journeypersons, and numbers of completed apprenticeships. Some unions have open enrollment all year round while others have application periods for only a short time in the spring. When you receive a notice of an apprenticeship opening from the Connecticut Labor Department, **make sure you follow the application deadlines stated.**

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP?

- **A high school diploma or GED may be required**, especially by union sponsored apprenticeships. Other sponsors may not require a diploma, so ask if one is necessary when you apply. Union sponsored programs will ask you to obtain copies of your high school transcript. Call the high school or GED program that you attended and ask them to send you a copy of the transcript. You may want to do this as soon as possible so that you will have the documents on hand when they are needed.

- **A current driver's license is required to work in the construction trades** because the work demands a frequent change of job site. Other trades, however, may not require one. Again, ask the particular sponsor.

- **Good physical condition is necessary to meet the physical demands of your trade**, which may include lifting heavy materials, operating heavy tools and equipment, standing on your feet all day, or working in adverse weather conditions. You can **prepare for this beforehand by following an exercise program** which can build up your strength and stamina. Call your local YWCA to find out what fitness programs they offer. Or check out some books on fitness from your local library and develop your own exercise program.

- **Age requirements. The minimum age for an apprenticeship is usually 18 years of age.** Some apprenticeships are **flexible** be beyond the upper limit, apply anyway. The apprenticeship sponsor will let you know if your age disqualifies you for that particular trade.

- **Adequate math background. Almost all trades require basic math proficiency. Don't be intimidated or discouraged** if it seems like a long time since you took high school math and your skills are rusty. Call your local state technical college or vocational technical high school for information on their math improvement courses for adults. Other technical courses are not necessary, but they may improve your chances of being selected for an apprenticeship.

- **Letters of recommendation.** If you have completed any courses at a technical school or worked in a job related to the trade that you have chosen, **you may want to obtain letters of recommendation from your teachers or employers.** These may be helpful in the application process.

- **Transportation.** Many employers require that you have access to a motor vehicle due to frequent changes in worksite. Make sure that you **know the transportation demands of your job** before you make a commitment.

- Finally, make sure you **have a realistic picture of the job**. An apprenticeship is a major commitment of your time and energy. The apprenticeship sponsor is also making a long term investment in you. You will need to be highly motivated to complete 2-4 years of on the job training and class room instruction.

WHAT KINDS OF SUPPORTIVE SERVICES ARE THERE?

- **Child care**. If you need assistance in finding an appropriate day care setting for your child, **call the Infoline number** listed in your local telephone directory. The Infoline staff will identify the day care resources available in your area.

- **Vocational education**.

  . Community colleges, state vocational technical high schools, state technical colleges, and community organizations offer a wide variety of adult education courses. To find out what is being offered in your area to suit your needs, call the

  . Education and Employment Hotline
  1-800-842-0229
  or 566-8118 in the Hartford area

  . Adults with a high school diploma or GED **may take day courses at the vocational technical high schools for free**, providing there is room in the classes. Call your local school and ask for the adult education director. A list of state vocational technical schools is included at the end of this booklet.

. If you are on public assistance, a displaced homemaker, a high school drop-out, a teen parent, a dislocated worker, or a person with limited English speaking ability, you may be eligible for education benefits through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Call the Education and Employment Hotline listed above for more information.

- Support groups. Some vocational technical schools, unions and community groups sponsor **support groups for tradeswomen to meet and discuss workplace issues** or other items of mutual interest. The PCSW also has a list of tradeswomen who are willing to talk with other women interested in entering the trades. These women might prove to be a valuable resource in answering any questions you might have. If you are looking for a support group for women in the trades or for a role model, contact the

  Permanent Commission on
  the Status of Women (PCSW)
  90 Washington Street
  Hartford, CT 06106
  566-5702

- **Job discrimination. Any apprentice or apprenticeship applicant who believes that she has been discriminated against may file a complaint with the Connecticut Labor Department.** State and federal laws prohibit an employer from discriminating against you on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, marital status, or sex.

Some examples of discrimination include:

- refusing to hire you because you are a woman
- refusing to provide you with adequate training because you are a woman
- paying you less wages than your male counterparts who are doing the same job, using equal skill, and having equal responsibility
- denying adequate toilet facilities on the worksite
- firing you because you are pregnant

Complaints should be filed with:

The Connecticut Labor Department
Office of Job Training and Skill Development
200 Folly Brook Boulevard
Wethersfield, CT 06109
566-2450

The complaint must be in writing and must have your signature. It must also include your name, address, and telephone number, the apprenticeship sponsor involved, and a brief description of the circumstances. The Labor Department will try to resolve the complaint informally. If this is not possible, the Labor Department will refer the complaint to the State Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO).

You may file a complaint with the State Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities on your own behalf. Complaints must be filed within 180 days of the date of the act of discrimination. Locations of the state CHRO offices are listed below.

If you would like information or assistance in filing a discrimination complaint, contact the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, 566-5702.

- **Sexual harassment. Women who enter the trades may face resistance from some of their male coworkers or supervisors.** Some men may believe stereotypes about women, such as "they aren't strong enough to do a man's job", or "they're afraid to get dirty". Other attitudes might include an unwillingness to let women enter what has been traditionally a "man's world". Whatever the underlying beliefs, this resistance may take the **form of sexual harassment; that is, any attention of a sexual nature which is offensive or intimidating.** Remember, **sexual harassment is illegal** and you have the right to work in an environment that is free from this behavior. **You are the judge of what is unwanted and offensive behavior.** Some examples of sexual harassment include:

    . demanding sexual favors in return for a job or a raise
    . unwanted physical contact
    . subjection to obscene jokes or pornographic material
    . remarks about personal anatomy

If you are being sexually harassed, you should do something about it. You should voice your objections to the person who is harassing you -- tell them to stop and that the behavior is unwanted and offensive. You should make a verbal and written complaint to

your supervisor or union steward (if you have one) asking for intervention. However, **if you feel unsafe doing this**, or if the harassment continues, you should file a complaint with the State Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. Complaints must be filed within 180 days of the date of the incidents of harassment. Listed below are the four regional offices which handle such complaints.

Remember, the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women(PCSW) can provide you with information or assist you in filing sexual harassment complaints. The address is:

90 Washington Street
Hartford, CT 06106
566-5702

REGIONAL OFFICES OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Capitol Region
1229 Albany Ave.
Hartford, CT 06112
566-7710

Eastern Region
100 Broadway,
City Hall
Norwich, CT 06360
886-5703

Southwest Region
1115 Main St
Bridgeport, CT
06604
579-6246

West Central Region
50 Linden St.
Waterbury, CT 06702
754-2108

ACTION

Have you:

- contacted the Connecticut Labor Department Office of Job Training and Skill Development?
- gone to your local Job Service Office?
- talked to employers in your area?
- gotten your transcript from your high school or GED program?
- obtained a current driver's license?
- started an exercise program to increase your strength and stamina?
- obtained letters of recommendation from teachers or employers?
- called the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women to put you in touch with tradeswomen who are willing to serve as role models?

JOB SERVICE OFFICES,
CONNECTICUT LABOR DEPARTMENT

Ansonia
555 Main Street
734-3367

Bridgeport
1450 Barnum Ave.
579-6262

Middletown
170B Main Street
344-2993

New Britain
260 Lafayette Street
827-7765

Bristol
281 North Main St.
582-7421

Danbury
64 West St.
797-4140

Danielson
61 Westcott Road
774-9379

Enfield
620 Enfield St.
623-9121

Hamden
37 Marne St.
789-7734

Hartford
90 Washington St.
566-5771

Manchester
806 Main St.
649-4558

Meriden
24 South Grove St.
238-6110

New London
94 Captain's Walk
443-8321

Norwalk
731 West Avenue
838-4104

Norwich
6 Cliff Street
889-5247

Stamford
81 Atlantic Street
348-7505

Torrington
Torrington Parkade
Winsted Road, 482-5583

Waterbury
83 Prospect Street
755-3099

Willimantic
8 Mountain Street
423-2521

Vocational-Technical Schools

ANSONIA
EMMETT O'BRIEN
141 Prindle Avenue
Ansonia 06401
735-9461

BRIDGEPORT
BULLARD-HAVENS
500 Palisades Avenue
Bridgeport 06610
579-6333

BRISTOL
E.C. GOODWIN SATELLITE
431 Minor Street
Bristol 06010
584-8433

DANBURY
HENRY ABBOTT
Haystown Avenue
Danbury 06810
797-4460

DANIELSON
H.H. ELLIS
Maple Street
Danielson 06239
774-8511

ENFIELD
HOWELL CHENEY SATELLITE
170 Elm Street
Enfield 06082
745-1603 (623-9877)

MANCHESTER
HOWELL CHENEY
791 W. Middle Tnpke.
Manchester 06040
649-5396

MERIDEN
H.C. WILCOX
Oregon Road
Meriden 06450
238-6260

MIDDLETOWN
VINAL
60 Daniels Street
Middletown 06457
344-2930

MILFORD
PLATT
600 Orage Avenue
Milford 06460
877-2771

NEW BRITAIN
E.C. GOODWIN
735 Slater Road
New Britain 06053
827-7736

NORWICH
NORWICH
590 New London Tnpke
Norwich 06360
889-8453

ESSEX
VINAL SATELLITE
Middlesex Turnpike
Essex 06426
767-0181

GROTON
ETG/SOUTHEASTERN
189 Fort Hill Road
Groton 06340
448-0220

HAMDEN
ELI WHITNEY
71 Jones Road
Hamden 06514
397-4031

HARTFORD
A.I. PRINCE
500 Brookfield Street
Hartford 06106
246-8594

STAMFORD
J.M. WRIGHT
P.O. Box 1416
Stamford 06904
324-7363

TORRINGTON
OLIVER WOLCOTT
75 Oliver Street
Torrington 06790
489-0261

WALLINGFORD
H.C.WILCOX SATELLITE
Pond Hill Road
Wallingford 06492
265-0099

WATERBURY
W.F. KAYNOR
43 Tompkins Street
Waterbury 06708
574-2307

WILLIMANTIC
WINDHAM
210 Birch Street
Willimantic 06226
423-4544

REFERENCES

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FOOTNOTES

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